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been particularly restrained and with so fine a sense of the problems inherent in the combination of two materials, so excellent a quality in its color and craftsmanship, that it is but reasonable to suppose that these two vases come from the workshop of one of the foremost makers of bronze-mountings of the time. From a consideration of the design alone, they might be attributed to one of three or four then active ciseleurs, but with the workmanship combined with the use of the various motives of design, it would appear that these pieces have come from the workshop of the most famous maker of them all, Pierre Gouthière. Gouthière, born at Lyons about 1740, executed works to order for the most famous collectors of the day. He was the hero of the sale of the collections of the Duc d'Aumont in 1782, and his financial ruin is directly due to the credit of 750,000 livres which he gave Madame du Barry, and which he was unable in his lifetime to recover. A pupil of Martincourt, his beginnings lie in the reign of Louis XV, but it was under the classical influence of the reign of Louis XVI that his work reached its greatest perfection.

Each of the details of our vases and its particular treatment can be discovered in examples of his work; the sureness and probity of the design and the superb quality of the craftsmanship are so undoubtable that in the absence of any signature upon them, we can only feel that these vases were the output of his large workshop, no doubt engaged the hands of the best of

his workmen, and not unlikely show the marks of his own chisel.

C. O. C.

## THE PUBLICATION OF OBJECTS IN THE EGYPTIAN COLLECTION

OF recent years there has been a growing appreciation, on the part of scholars both American and foreign, of the importance of the Egyptian

collections in the Metropolitan Museum. As the antiquities here inspire students of archaeology to make them the subjects of their studies, they become available for a wider public than any which one museum can reach. In fact they pass, so to speak, into that world-wide collection which is preserved on our library shelves. And, incidentally, the authors of even the slenderest notices on objects in this Museum invariably repay us richly for their use of them by throwing upon them some new light which helps us in

our appreciation of them or serves to dignify them with their proper importance.

The following notes on some of the smaller objects in the Egyptian collection give some hint of this process and show what enlightenment is thrown by others on objects with which we ourselves have long been familiar.

Thus in the BULLETIN of March, 1917, two pieces of very early relief, now shown in the Third Egyptian Room,<sup>1</sup> were described and evidence adduced to show

<sup>1</sup>Acc. No. 11.150.30-1.



VASE, FRENCH, PERIOD OF LOUIS XVI

that they were earlier than the Fourth Dynasty. The article which brought them to the attention of BULLETIN readers was reviewed in *Ancient Egypt*, 1917, page 170, when the attributions in date and provenance were accepted and very interesting confirmation supplied. The reviewer concludes: "We would go a step further and say that the face of the King, especially the

obtain antiquities at that time from a site near Zagazig, among the most important of which was the Fourth Dynasty offering-stand of Khafre, published in the BULLETIN of November, 1907. If our two bas-reliefs did not come from Heliopolis, they may have come from this other Old Kingdom Delta site at Zagazig.

Again, an added historical importance

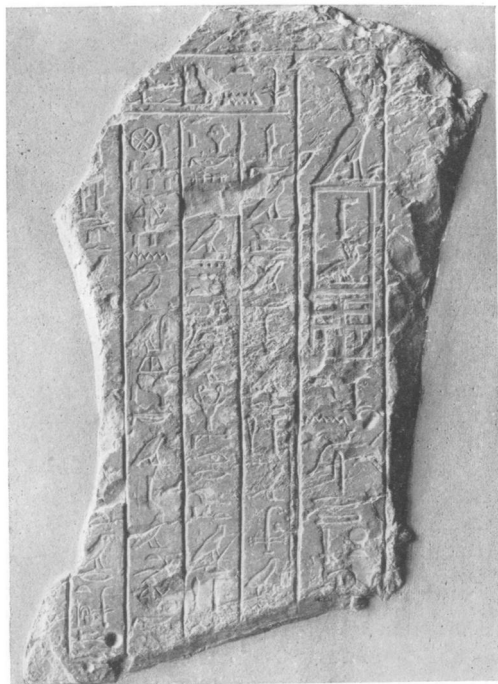


FIG. 1. PART OF A DECREE OF KING NETERBAU  
FROM THE TEMPLE OF KOPTOS

nose, is so closely like that of Sa-Nekht at Maghara in Sinai, that it is probable that the work is of the Third Dynasty, perhaps of that very King. The pieces are stated to have come from the Delta; this cannot mean far north, as all the early levels of the northern Delta are under water. Heliopolis would be the most likely source, especially as sculpture of Neterkhet was found there by Schiaparelli. New York is fortunate in getting pieces of such rare early sculpture."

The dealer from whom these two pieces of sculpture were bought, in 1911, used to

has been given by M. A. Moret to a number of inscriptions from Koptos presented to the Museum by Edward S. Harkness in 1914, and exhibited in the Fourth Room.<sup>1</sup>

It was the custom of the priests of the Temple of Min at Koptos to inscribe on the temple gateway the royal charters and grants in favor of the temple or its chapter, and of late years a number of these inscriptions have been found setting forth the decrees of the little-known kings whose reigns closed the Old Kingdom. Moret in the *Comptes Rendus de l'Academie des*

<sup>1</sup>Acc. No. 14.7.10-14.

Inscriptions, 1914, page 565, translates one, now in Cairo, which confers upon the priest Shmay the office of Governor General of the South, designating by name the twenty-two nomes or provinces from the Cataract to the Delta which were to be administered by him. To this document he relates one of those in this Museum (Fig. 1), giving a translation and a commentary on it. The decree in this case, promulgated by King Neterbau (about 2450 B. C.), makes the son of Shmay Governor General of the South in succession to his father, but cuts down his domain from twenty-two nomes to a bare seven. As Moret points out, here is an interesting glimpse of the politics of the time. The family of Shmay was trying to make the office of Governor General hereditary and the king, whose power was steadily failing, as we know, dared not make a flat refusal but did succeed in clipping the wings of his ambitious subject materially.

A further interesting feature of this very ancient commission of office might be added to Moret's commentary. The succeeding kings found it advisable to make this reduction of the domain of the Governor General permanent. The Museum possesses a number of stelae from Thebes, as yet unpublished, dating from the reigns of the Princes Intef. One of the earliest of this line, Intef son of Ikuy, was Governor General of the South about three centuries later than Shmay's son, but his domain was still limited to the same seven nomes, and when the Thebans revolted they constituted for some years the Theban principality.

Two other Koptos inscriptions, likewise given to the Metropolitan Museum by Mr. Harkness, are published by Moret in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1916, pages 323 and 325. The first is a mere fragment of a decree giving to Shmay directions as to the disposition of offerings, presumably before the statue of the king. The second, practically complete, is a decree from the king, brought to Koptos by the courtier Idu to be engraved on a stela of white stone and erected at the gateway of the temple of Min. In its terms it grants immunity to the temple from imposts and levies of all kings.

Up to the present Moret's study of two more texts of this set in the Museum has not appeared. They give us, first, a decree promulgated by King Neterbau on the 20th day of the 2nd month of his accession year, defining the duties of Shmay and his son in the Temple of Min, and second, another decree of the same king, addressed likewise to Shmay, settling the rank of a certain princess and ordering the construction of a temple barque.

In the *Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*, 1917, p. 194, N. de Garis Davies describes a fragment of an architect's plan from Thebes, which he presented to the Museum in 1914, and which is now on exhibition in the "Daily Life" room in the Egyptian Department (Fig. 2).

The plan was drawn upon one of the wooden writing tablets covered with fine stucco which commonly served the scribes of the early Eighteenth Dynasty (about 1500 B. C.). Unfortunately we possess hardly more than a quarter of the complete tablet and therefore lack many clues for its interpretation, which is, however, largely atoned for by Davies' very interesting study.

Comparing the ratios between the recorded dimensions in cubits, palms, and fingers of some of the areas with the actual dimensions on the plan, he arrives at the proportion of 1:225 as the scale of the latter, in other words, one eighth of a finger to the cubit. As he points out, the Egyptian draughtsman was seriously handicapped by his lack of precise drawing instruments and finely divided rulers, and his plans were therefore never to a consistent scale throughout. The general lay-out of the structure was all that the architect attempted to represent, relying for detailed guides to the builder upon the dimensions which he recorded in writing. However, some idea of a proportional scale existed in his mind, and while this is probably one of the most nearly accurate of the ancient Egyptian plans in existence, others are known where the draughtsman has approximated the scales of an eighth of a finger to the cubit, and of one finger to the cubit.

As Davies points out, an ancient work-

ing plan for the construction of an edifice would probably have laid out the dimensions in round numbers of cubits. Changes, compromises, or inaccuracies would have crept into the building as it went forward, and the finished structure would, on being remeasured, have shown dimensions to

shown in elevation, opens on a long alley planted with trees beneath a massive wall. A rectangle in the center of the court may represent a tank such as is often shown in drawings of palatial estates, or a platform, from the far side of which ascends another stairway. Many of these

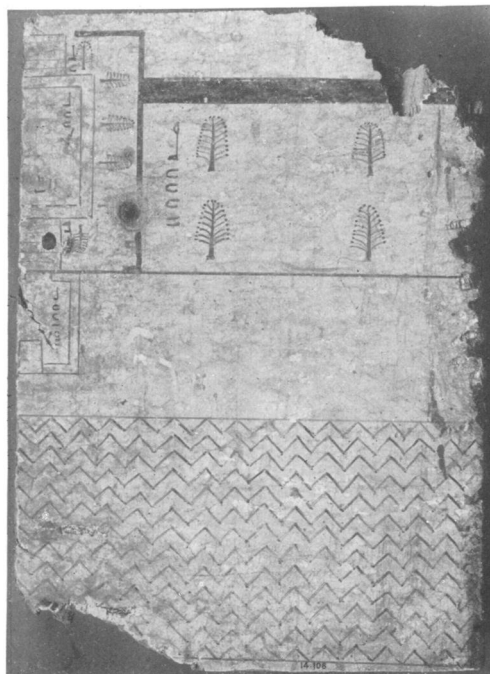


FIG. 2. FRAGMENT OF AN  
ARCHITECTURAL PLAN  
FROM THEBES

fractions of the cubit exactly as recorded on this plan. He therefore concludes that the plan in the Museum is a measured drawing of an actual edifice, rather than a plan for a projected one or a purely imaginative composition. As for its nature, he shows that in the foreground there lies a canal on the banks of which there is a monumental gateway. A landing stage leads to a flight of stairs within a forecourt surrounded by trees. At the side a door,

features are well known as parts of the gateways or propylaea of great estates or of temples, and Davies points out how very like this plan is to the landing stage on the river bank in front of the temple of Karnak. To identify the structure more closely is, however, hazardous, but Davies throws out the tentative suggestion that it may be the entrance to one of the two Deir el Bahri temples.

H. E. W.